

REMARKS

The above amendment is made in response to the Final Office Action of August 25, 2003. Claims 1, 15, and 29 have been amended. Claims 1-32 are pending in the present application and stand rejected. The Examiner's reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the above amendment and the following remarks.

Claims 1-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rosin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,295,057) (hereinafter "Rosin") in view of Williams et al. (U.S. 5,945,988) (hereinafter "Williams"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amended claims 1 and 15 recite, *inter alia*, the step of "defining a social interaction genre *for computer-mediated communication between two or more people*." Amended claim 29 recites, *inter alia*, the step of "receiving requests from the plurality of users to participate in *a computer-mediated social interactive session between two or more people*." "Genres" are defined on page 1, line 10 as "structured styles of interaction." The "interactions" referred in the present disclosure are described on page 10, lines 3-4 as "[interactions] that take place via networked services."

Therefore claim 1 essentially claims a structured interaction for computer-mediated communication between two or more people via networked services.

Rosin describes an Internet on-demand system for television presenting Internet content and traditional television programming as part of a single coherent interface. Although Rosin describes user interaction via the Internet, the interaction is between a user and the on-demand system, and not between two or more people. As such, Rosin does not teach or suggest "defining a social interaction genre for computer-mediated conversation between two or more people," as claimed in claim 1.

Further, as noted in Paper No. 7, Rosin discloses “a specific dedicated menu [available to the user] for each situation, such as browsing, sending email, reading email, or retrieving email.” However, Rosin does not provide “*computer-mediated* communication between two or more people.”

Williams describes a method and apparatus for automatically determining and dynamically updating user preferences in an entertainment system. Williams discloses user interaction with the entertainment system, but the interaction is not “*computer-mediated* communication between two or more people,” as essentially claimed in claim 1.

The Final Office Action admits that Rosin fails to disclose “*updating a state* of the instance and responding to user’s requests if said input satisfies a criteria set by the instance’s interaction rules.” Because Rosin fails to disclose “*updating a state*,” it logically follows from the above that Rosin also fails to disclose “*broadcasting the updated state* to all online users operatively connected to the instance,” as claimed in claims 1 and 15.

The Final Office Action cites col. 13, lines 59-67 of Rosin as disclosing the step of broadcasting the updated state to all online users. First, this argument is flawed because the Final Office Action already admitted that Rosin fails to disclose “*updating a state*.” Therefore, Rosin cannot logically *broadcast* the “*updated state*.” Second, notwithstanding the above, the citation provided by the Final Office Action does not teach or suggest the step of broadcasting the updated state to all online users. Col 13, lines 59-67 of Rosin simply disclose a television receiver capable of monitoring and storing the predetermined genre codes for television programming. Williams similarly fails to teach or suggest the step of broadcasting the updated state to all online users. As such, Rosin and Williams,

alone or in combination, fail to disclose “broadcasting the updated state to all online users operatively connected to the instance,” as claimed in claims 1 and 15.

With regard to claim 29, the Final Office Action fails to address all the limitations of claim 29, including: registering said users by storing user identifications and passwords of respective users; storing said identifications and passwords in a user database; authorizing said users as participants in the interactive session upon receiving a clearance signal; setting parameters and rules governing the interactive session and informing the participants of the parameters and rules; and enforcing penalties upon participants violating said rules. It is submitted that Rosin and Williams, alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all the limitations of claim 29.

Notwithstanding the arguments presented above, it is further submitted that Rosin and Williams are not analogous art and are not properly combined. As previously stated, Rosin discloses an Internet on-demand system for television presenting Internet content and traditional television programming as part of a single coherent interface, and Williams discloses a method and apparatus for automatically determining and dynamically updating user preferences in an entertainment system, for example, preprogrammed channels on a television set. It is clear from the above descriptions that Williams bears no relation to providing Internet content and traditional television programming in a single coherent interface, as disclosed in Rosin. As such, Williams is not pertinent to the field of endeavor of Rosin. It is well-established that hindsight may not be used to combine references. Applicants submit that the only way to combine the teachings of Rosin and Williams, as argued by the Final Office Action, is to use such impermissible hindsight.

The Final Office Action argues that col. 15, lines 21-26 of Williams discloses “wherein the step of defining a social interaction genre includes one of copying and modifying a previously defined interaction genre,” as claimed in claim 2. Col. 15, lines 21-26 of Williams recite:

“In one embodiment of the present invention, various automatically configured options discussed above can be viewed and modified by users. In this embodiment, users are able to access their preferences on user profile database 700 of FIG. 7 and add to, subtract from, and/or modify their recorded preferences.”

Nothing in the citation of Williams teaches or suggests copying and modifying a previously defined interaction genre. As such, the combination of Rosin and Williams does not teach or suggest “wherein the step of defining a social interaction genre includes one of copying and modifying a previously defined interaction genre,” as claimed in claim 2.

The Final Office Action argues that col. 13, lines 59-67 of Rosin discloses “wherein the step of defining a social interaction genre includes specifying rules of a graphic representation of the genre, including rules specifying how interactions are represented,” as claimed in claim 3. Col. 13, lines 59-67 of Rosin recite:

Predetermined codes can be provided as part of data transmitted on a television signal to identify the genre of a television program being broadcasted. A television receiver which is capable of monitoring and storing the predetermined genre codes for television programming in order to select programs based on past viewing habits is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,585,865 (“Amano, et al.”), which is hereby incorporated by reference. These genre codes can be consistent with or convertible to the attributes associated with web pages in order to provide additional information to the agent to determine areas of interest for the client user. The client processor can store the genre codes associated with previously viewed television programming, and then provide this data to the agent to augment its web browsing data.

Col. 13, lines 59-67 of Rosin simply disclose a television receiver capable of monitoring and storing predetermined genre codes for television programming. Nothing in the citation teaches or suggests specifying rules of a graphic representation of the genre, much less rules specifying how interactions are represented. As such, the combination of

Rosin and Williams does not teach or suggest “wherein the step of defining a social interaction genre includes specifying rules of a graphic representation of the genre, including rules specifying how interactions are represented,” as claimed in claim 3.

The Final Office Action argues that col. 14, lines 7-15 of Rosin discloses “wherein the graphic representation includes specified symbols representing respective users’ roles,” as claimed in claim 4. The citation of Rosin provided by the Final Office Action simply discloses associating various attributes to web pages for identifying aspects of subject matter of content of the web page. Nothing is provided in the citation of Rosin that teaches or suggests specified symbols representing users’ roles in a graphic representation. As such, the combination of Rosin and Williams does not disclose “wherein the graphic representation includes specified symbols representing respective users’ roles,” as claimed in claim 4.

The Final Office Action argues that col. 7, lines 9-18 of Rosin disclose “wherein the graphic representation includes specified distances from references to proportionally represent action or nonaction of users,” as claimed in claim 5. Col. 7, lines 9-18 of Rosin recite:

The templates can be part of specific gateway interfaces tailored for specific user profiles. For example, the user may initially be required to select a general, preferably demographically-based, profile which may provide preselected web links in a predetermined set of categories. The particular graphical interface in which these links are presented to the user can also be selected based upon the experience level and the amount of interactivity desired by the user, which may also be automatically modified over time by an agent to fit the experience level of the user.

As is readily apparent from even a cursory reading of the citation above, col. 7, lines 9-18 of Rosin is not even remotely related to claim 5. As such, the combination of Rosin and Williams does not teach or suggest “wherein the graphic representation includes specified

distances from references to proportionally represent action or nonaction of users,” as claimed in claim 5.

The Final Office Action argues that col. 16, lines 12-28 of Rosin disclose “wherein the graphic representation includes specified positions representing status of respective users,” as claimed in claim 6. Col. 16, lines 12-28 of Rosin disclose the use of compression/decompression techniques for more rapid delivery over limited bandwidth. The use of compression and decompression techniques is wholly unrelated to any portion of claim 6. As such, the combination of Rosin and Williams does not teach or suggest “wherein the graphic representation includes specified positions representing status of respective users,” as claimed in claim 6.

The Final Office Action argues that claims 7-9 are disclosed by col. 13, lines 58-67 of Rosin. As stated above, col. 13, lines 58-67 of Rosin simply disclose a television receiver capable of monitoring and storing predetermined genre codes for television programming. Claim 7 claims, *inter alia*, “wherein said step of creating an operation instance of a genre includes setting genre parameters.” Claim 8 claims, *inter alia*, “wherein said genre parameters include genre roles. Claim 9 claims, *inter alia*, “wherein said genre parameters include rule parameters.” As is clear from reading claims 7-9, the col. 13, lines 58-67 of Rosin are wholly unrelated to claims 7-9. As such, the combination of Rosin and Williams does not teach or suggest all the limitations of claims 7-9.

The Final Office Action argues that claims 11, 23, and 28 are disclosed in col. 13, lines 55-66 of Williams. Col. 13, lines 55-66 of Williams discloses a system control agent for identifying a user, identifying programming that might be of interest to the user, and monitoring the television viewing habits of the user. Claim 11 claims, *inter alia*, “wherein

said input includes the user's change in roles by dragging and dropping of graphics elements of the graphic representation of the state of the instance." Claim 23 claims, *inter alia*, "wherein said updating step includes repositioning the icons representing the operative users." Claim 28 claims, *inter alia*, "further including the step of identifying a given user by moving a cursor over the icon representing that user." It is clear that col. 13, lines 55-66 of Williams is wholly unrelated to claims 11, 23 and 28. As such, the combination of Rosin and Williams do not teach or suggest all the limitations of claims 11, 23, 28.

The Final Office Action argues that col. 10, lines 19-23 of Williams discloses "wherein said user's requests include requesting to ask a question," as claimed in claim 12. Col. 10, lines 19-23 of Williams recites: "In an alternate implementation, the training of the system is done indirectly via an on-screen questionnaire(s), wherein the user is asked to select from a list of program genre (science fiction, sports, documentaries, etc.) that the user enjoys watching." The citation of Williams is clearly distinguishable from claim 12. Col. 10, lines 19-23 of Williams discloses a system that provides a questionnaire which asks the users questions. Claim 12 discloses *a user's request* to ask a question. Williams does not teach or suggest a user requesting to ask a question. As such, the combination of Rosin and Williams does not teach or suggest "wherein said user's requests include requesting to ask a question," as claimed in claim 12.

The Final Office Action argues that col. 7, lines 52-62 of Williams disclose "wherein said user's requests include a request for a clarification," as claimed in claim 13. Col. 7, lines 52-62 of Williams discloses the use of a system controller for continuously monitoring user interaction with the system to update and refine user preference

information. Nothing in the citation of Williams teaches or suggests a user requesting clarification. As such, the combination of Rosin and Williams does not teach or suggest “wherein said user’s requests include a request for a clarification,” as claimed in claim 13.

The Final Office Action argues that col. 8, lines 49-55 of Williams discloses “wherein said step of monitoring includes monitoring the passage of time between inputs by a user,” as claimed in claim 14. Col. 8, lines 49-55 of Williams discloses monitoring user interaction with the system until the system controller detects a new user. Nothing is mentioned in Williams about monitoring the “*passage of time between inputs by a user.*” As such, the combination of Rosin and Williams does not teach or suggest “wherein said step of monitoring includes monitoring the passage of time between inputs by a user,” as claimed in claim 14.

The Final Office Action cites col. 11, lines 31-45 of Williams as disclosing claims 16-18. Col 11, lines 31-45 recite:

In one embodiment of the present invention, user profile database 700 also includes storage for user-defined requests. System controller 104 allows individual users to input requests for particular suggestions. These requests can be for specific titles of shows/movies or keywords, the request may include wildcards (e.g., any shows with "star" in the title), and can also be negative (e.g., no shows with "star" in the title). Given a particular search request, system controller 104 searches the programming information each time it receives updated programming information (via an on-line service, diskette, etc. as discussed above), and prompts the user with the found program information in step 402. The user is then able to select viewing and/or recording of the program.

Claim 16 claims, *inter alia*, “wherein said step of updating the state of the instance and executing specified actions in response to enforcement rules includes sending the rule violator a message.” Claim 17 claims, *inter alia*, “wherein said step of updating the state of the instance and executing specified actions in response to enforcement rules includes disconnecting a user violating said rules from the current instance.” Claim 18 claims, *inter alia*, “wherein said step of updating the state of the instance and executing specified

actions in response to enforcement rules includes barring a user violating said rules from future connections for a specified period of time.” Nothing in the citation of Williams discloses the use of enforcement rules, much less executing specified actions in response to the enforcement rules. Col. 11, lines 31-45 of Williams simply disclose user search requests for television programming. As such, the combination of Rosin and Williams does not teach or suggest all the limitations of claims 16, 17, and 18.

The Final Office Action argues that col. 15, lines 26-40 of Williams disclose claims 19, 24, and 31-32. Col. 15, lines 26-40 simply summarizes the invention of Williams. Nothing in Williams is disclosed in reference to a graphic representation. Further nothing is disclosed in reference to enforcement rules or executing specified actions in reference to enforcement rules. It is entirely unclear to Applicants the grouping of claims 19, 24, and 31-32 as being disclosed by col. 15, lines 26-40 of Williams. Claims 19, 24, and 31-32 each claim distinguishable limitations. As such, the combination of Rosin and Williams does not teach or suggest all the limitations of claims 19, 24, and 31-32.

The Final Office Action argues that col. 9, lines 31-42 of Williams discloses claims 20-22. Col. 9, lines 31-42 of Williams recite:

In one embodiment, the user metric takes into account the current settings in system 100 for each user configurable option as stored in user profile database 700, such as television channel, current volume setting, current audio station, program genre, etc. It is to be appreciated that in order to identify some information, such as program genre, system controller 104 may need to access program database 800 of FIG. 8 to identify which program and thus the program genre of the television channel currently being viewed. In other embodiments, this supplemental information may be provided in the broadcast itself as intercast information, or in the VBI.

Claim 20 claims, *inter alia*, “wherein said step of updating the state of the instance in response to interaction rules includes changing the genre of the instance.” Claim 21 claims, *inter alia*, “wherein the graphic representation of the instance is changed in response to the changing of its genre.” Claim 22 claims, *inter alia*, “wherein said step of

updating the state of the instance includes changing one or more genre parameters including genre roles.” As is readily apparent from reading the citation of Williams and claims 20-22, the citation of Williams is wholly unrelated to claims 20-22. As such, the combination of Rosin and Williams does not teach or suggest all the limitations of claims 20-22.

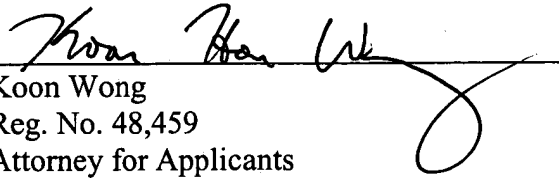
The Final Office Action argues that claims 25-27 are disclosed by col. 13, lines 59-67 of Rosin. As stated above, col. 13, lines 59-67 of Rosin simply disclose a television receiver capable of monitoring and storing predetermined genre codes for television programming. As is clear from reading claims 25-27, the col. 13, lines 59-67 of Rosin are wholly unrelated to claims 25-27. Nothing in the citation of Rosin teaches or suggests broadcasting the updated state. As such, the combination of Rosin and Williams does not teach or suggest all the limitations of claims 25-27.

Accordingly, amended claims 1, 15, and 29 are believed to be patentably distinguishable and nonobvious over Rosin and Williams. Dependent claims 2-14, 16-28, and 30-32 are believed to be allowable for at least the reasons given for claims 1, 15, and 29, as well as the additional arguments provide above. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-32 is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all the claims now pending in the application are in condition for allowance. Early and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

By:


Koon Wong
Reg. No. 48,459
Attorney for Applicants

F.CHAU & ASSOCIATES, LLP
1900 Hempstead Turnpike, Suite 501
East Meadow, New York 11554
Telephone: (516) 357-0091
Facsimile: (516) 357-0092